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COMMITTEE:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
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AND PENSIONS
INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3201

September 28, 2001

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DEC 31 2002

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Mr. Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20024-2101

Dear Chairman Powell:

The successful operation of Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) systems will bring to unserved and underserved areas the same advanced communications capabilities available to urban users, and will enhance the capabilities of public safety and military personnel.

As we sadly learned this month, satellite systems are an indispensable segment of the national telecommunications infrastructure, and can serve a key role in restoring communications capacity in the event that terrestrial facilities are disabled. The ability of MSS systems to provide ubiquitous global connectivity is uniquely suited to fulfill this and other important public policy goals. For the millions of Americans living in rural areas with no mobile voice or data service, MSS networks will be their best, and perhaps only, choice for high-speed digital connections. Maritime, military, public safety, and recreational users will also benefit from MSS coverage of rural areas, and from global MSS coverage in the event of a natural disaster or other crisis.

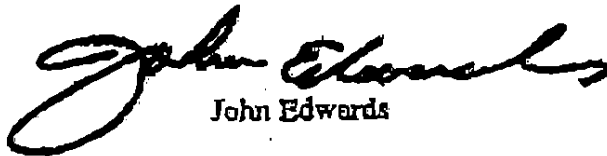
On August 9th, the Federal Communications Commission recognized the importance of MSS when it began a proceeding to allow licensed MSS operators to fill in coverage holes by re-using their assigned frequencies over an ancillary terrestrial component - a concept the Commission has endorsed previously with respect to other satellite service. To the extent that 2GHz MSS operators can maximize their spectrum efficiency through an ancillary terrestrial component, they will be better able to attract the billions of dollars in financial capital necessary to build and launch their systems. Therefore, ancillary terrestrial service will enhance the ability of MSS operators to serve customers by improving the economics of MSS.

Significantly, this proposal does not require sharing among different licensees or allocation of additional spectrum. In addition, terrestrial service would be allowed only after commercial operation of the satellite service and in a manner consistent with prior Commission decisions on combined use systems.

If the 2GHz MSS service is to succeed, the Commission must decide the issue as quickly as possible, because applicants cannot begin in earnest to raise the enormous sums necessary to

design, build, and deploy their systems while such an important aspect of the service rules are under consideration. Under the circumstances, delay may be tantamount to denial. Therefore, I urge you to move as quickly as possible to resolve this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Edwards", with a stylized, flowing script.

John Edwards

JE/sm